



A relational approach to modern literary Arabic conditional clauses

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For a *relational* approach to modern literary Arabic conditional clauses¹.

0. Introduction

The issue of the conditional in classical Arabic is treated in the classical Arabic grammars, be the authors Arab, both traditional such as *Awḍaḥ al-Masālik*'s Ibn Hišām (Ibn Hišām, 1989) (d. 761/1360) and modern as *Ġamīʿ al-Durūs al-ʿArabiyya*'s al-Ġalāyīnī (1886-1944) (Ġalāyīnī (Al-), 2000), or foreign (Arabist), for instance Blachère and Demombynes (Blachère et Gaudefroy-Demombynes, 1975) or Fischer (Fischer, 1987) or the work dedicated by Peled to this question (Peled, 1992). Using the novel by Ġamāl al-Ġiṭānī, *Al-Zaynī Barakāt* as a starting point, we identified many deviations from the rules of the classical Arabic. The question then arose as to how we express the conditional in Modern Arabic. Assuming that the answer must be found in the Modern Standard Arabic grammars, we intended to compare what we saw in different contemporary literary texts with what these grammars present to us on the subject. Yet, the study of the literary texts shows that these grammars are descriptively inadequate. Our purpose here will be to study only the literary register of Modern Standard Arabic, highlighting at the same time the descriptive inadequacy of the Modern Standard Arabic grammars and the *relationship* existing between the operator of the conditional clause and the apodosis of the hypothetical system in question.

1. Literary corpus, methodology and first observations

Regarding descriptive realism, we chose a linguistic approach based on corpus and thus have reviewed hypothetical systems *in extenso* through various contemporary literary works. In diachrony, our sample covers the period from 1963 to 2005. These then are novels by authors born after the 1930s, *i.e.* well after the second generation of the *Nahḍa* and its effects on the Arabic language, and at a time when the influence of European languages on it must have been already widely felt. Geographically speaking, our corpus ranges from Syria to Morocco. The list of works is as follow: Kanafānī, *Riġāl fī l-šams* and *Al-ʿĀšiq*²; Zafzāf, *Hiwār layl mutaʿaḥḥir*³; Ġiṭānī, *Al-Zaynī Barakāt*⁴; Tāmīr, *Al-Numūr fī l-yawm al-ʿāšir*⁵; Miṣʿidī, *Ḥaddaṭa Abū Hurayra qāla...*⁶; Ibrāhīm, *al-Laġna*, *Dāt* and *Warda*⁷; Ibn

¹. I dedicate this paper, which is a translation from my French article « Pour une approche relationnelle de la conditionnelle en arabe littéraire moderne » published in *Arabica*, 2010, 57, pp. 68-98, to ʿAdil and Muḥammad, for them to understand a little bit more what I do to their language... All my special thanks to Hannah Scottdeuchar who has gently read and corrected this English version, with patience and accuracy.

². Kanafānī, 2002 ; Kanafānī, 1987.

³. Zafzāf, 1970.

⁴. Ġiṭānī (Al-), 1974 : 225-345 = Ghitani, 1985 : 211-316.

⁵. Tāmīr, 1981.

⁶. Miṣʿidī, 1997.

⁷. Ibrāhīm, 1997 ; Ibrāhīm, 1998 = Ibrahim, 1993 ; Ibrāhīm, 2000 = Ibrahim, 2005.

Haddūqa, *Al-Ġāziya wa-l-darāwīš*⁸; al-Kūnī, *Malakūt ṭiflat al-Rabb*⁹. It is clear that what both Arab and Arabist Classical Arabic grammars teach us inadequately reflects modern uses. We should also note that these uses do not sufficiently shock modern translators who, otherwise, would perhaps not have failed to report them. This is a direct result of the fact that this new syntax is familiar to us, since it is more or less ours...

For our study then, we identified all of the conditional clause operators present in the novels mentioned, *i.e.* both the two "classical" particles *in* and *law* (and its derivatives, including *law-lā*), and the time circunstant (*ẓarf zamān*) *idā* (and its derivatives including *idā mā* "as soon as, hardly"). From this set, we naturally chose to keep only truly hypothetical systems (where the protasis *p* logically implies the apodosis *q*), thus excluding the concessive clauses (*wa-law*, *ḥattā law*, *ḥattā wa-law*, *ḥattā idā*, *wa-in*, etc.). Of the remaining systems, we then retained only the hypothetical systems that are doubly verbal and assertive. "Doubly verbal" excludes 1) systems that have a protasis introduced by *law anna* or *law-lā*, 2) systems that are not fully conditional (*i.e.* cases of protasis without apodosis which are truncation, optation and frozen uses, like *law samaḥta* or *in šā'a llaḥ*), and 3) systems whose apodosis is a nominal or existential sentence (like *lā budda an*, *'alay-hi an*, *bi-wus'i-hi an*). However, this distinction retains the apodoses which are phrases made up of initial NP/report where the report is itself a verbal sentence (like *inna-hu fa'ala/yaf'alu*¹⁰). "Assertive" excludes the imperative, the negative imperative, and the interrogative. From this first selection, out of the entire identified corpus, we get 402 systems. Of this total, we will only process the 283 relevant *if p q* sequences (which represent 70.40% of the total while the sequence *q if p* only represents 29.60%), to assess the possible importance of *fa-* in the Potential systems and of *la-* in the Unreal systems.

In Postclassical Arabic, the Arabic hypothetical system can be schematized as follows, showing the possible verbal forms, both in protasis and apodosis, and also the hypothetical statutes:

Table 1. The hypothetical system in grammars of Postclassical Arabic

	Protasis	Apodosis	
<i>idā</i>	<i>fa'ala</i>	<i>fa'ala</i>	Past Eventual
<i>idā</i>	<i>fa'ala</i>	<i>fa'ala/yaf'alu</i>	Present Eventual
<i>idā</i>	<i>fa'ala</i>	<i>fa'ala</i>	Potential ¹¹
<i>law</i>	<i>fa'ala/kāna yaf'alu</i>	<i>(fa-)yaf'alu/(la-)fa'ala</i>	Present Unreal ¹²

⁸. Ben Haddūqa, 1991.

⁹. Kūnī (Al-), 2005.

¹⁰. We will formalize the verbal forms of protases and apodoses as following: *māḍī* (perfect) = *fa'ala*, *muḍāri' marfū'* (imperfect indicative) = *yaf'alu*, *muḍāri' manṣūb* (imperfect subjunctive) = *yaf'ala* and *muḍāri' maḡzūm* (imperfect apocopate) = *yaf'al*. We are reminding here that the affirmative apocopate does not affect systems in *idā* or *law* (see Alish, 2005 : 271 and examples p. 195, 218), which confirms the following example: *idā ḡunna yas'alūna-hu 'annī* (*Ḥaddaṭa* : 69): "When he gets mad, they ask him about me". The apocopate seems still to be in use in the *in* systems. See example below (11).

¹¹. The distinction between Past Eventual and Potential occurs only with recourse to the context.

¹². This line reads in pairs of words: *law fa'ala... (fa-)yaf'alu* or *law kana yaf'alu... (la-)fa'ala* as proposed

Within the 283 relevant systems, we first observe the near disappearance of *in*: the latter represents only 16 occurrences, that is to say 5.65% of the total. In so doing, our purpose will be to focus primarily on the two remaining operators, *idā* and *law*.

We then observe the overwhelming usage of the perfect form of the protasis verb (97.18%). Only 8 systems in *law* have a imperfect protasis verb.

Regarding now the apodoses, we find, next to the expected *fa'ala*, the *yaf'alu* verbal form. We also observe structures that tolerate a verb like *sa-yaf'alu* in the apodosis. This concerns 28.57% of *idā* systems and 13.84% of *law* systems. We are thus dealing with three possible forms of apodosis both for *idā* and *law*: *yaf'alu*, *sa-yaf'alu* and *fa'ala*. Without denying the possible existence of cases of ambiguity, as in Classical Arabic, the principle of non synonymy requires looking beyond the three forms of apodosis (*yaf'alu*, *sa-yaf'alu* and *fa'ala*) to three distinct conditional meanings.

It appears moreover that some systems in *idā fa'ala...fa'ala*, classically linked to Eventual and Potential, are here indeed linked to both and thus describe a statute complying with that described in Classical Arabic grammars. But many of these *idā fa'ala...fa'ala* denote instead the Present Unreal! And if we add to this the fact that Badawi *et al.* (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 647) indicate that *law* can be synonymous of *in*, then what about the strict classical dichotomy based on the operators: *idā/in*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal?

From our corpus, we also note that the "segmentator" *fa*⁻¹³, far from being systematic¹⁴, represents only 36.70% of the apodoses in (*sa*)-*yaf'alu*; apodoses that should impose it, according to the canons of classical grammar. Thus, it seems no longer to indicate a *simultaneous* syntactic and semantic break, as it did in Classical Arabic¹⁵ but to occur mainly for contrastive reasons, permitting the indication that what follows is indeed the beginning of the apodosis.

As for *la*-, it also now appears, possibly in imitation of *law*, to indicate the Unreal in *idā* systems. However it is not systematic in Unreal systems, representing only 52.35% of the apodoses in *fa'ala*. It should nevertheless be noted that while quasi-systematically absent from Unreal systems in *idā*, it is quasi-systematically present in the case of the Past Unreal in *law*. This can be called regrettable because, as we will see, it would have allowed differentiation between two *idā fa'ala...fa'ala* systems, which only the context can disambiguate: the Past Eventual and... the Present Unreal. Like *fa*-, it may, when present, indicate the beginning of the apodosis, since this is not systematic.

In summary, it appears 1) that various forms of apodoses (*yaf'alu*, *sa-yaf'alu* and *fa'ala*) appear in the hypothetical systems in *idā* as in *law*, 2) that the dichotomy *idā/in*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal is no longer as strict as it was, and 3) that *fa*- is not obligatory in cases classically thought to require it,

by Pierre Larcher (Larcher, 2003b). It is also noteworthy that Moïnfar quoted by Abi Aad, 2001 : 107, suggests distinguishing between the Present Unreal in *law yaf'alu... yaf'alu* (*law tadrusu tanğahu* "If you were studying you would succeed") and the Past Unreal in *law fa'ala... la-fa'ala* (*law darasta lanğahṭa* "If you had studied you would have succeeded"). However, it was impossible for us to verify this assertion.

¹³. About "segmentator" expression and the introduction in arabics studies of the notion of segmentation from Charles Bally, see Larcher, 2006.

¹⁴. Which seems to corroborate Taha, 1995 : 180-182 quoted by Ryding, 2005 : 671.

¹⁵. On the presence of *fa*- in CA, see among others Ibn Hišām, 1989/IV : 113 and what follows; Zamaḥṣarī (Al-), 1999 : 417; Larcher, 2000; Ayoub, 2003.

just as *la-* for *law* seems now to be optional. What do the Modern Arabic grammars say about all of this ?

2. What the Modern Arabic grammars show and what they do not : the grammars' descriptive inadequacy

As we can see, all this contrasts in a very singular way with what is taught (and then learned and re-produced and taught again...). This is "normal" in the case of the presentation of the normalized expression of the conditional put forward by the *modern* grammars of Classical Arabic, like Haywood and Nahmad (Haywood et Nahmad, 2001 : 290-300). These mention the classic dichotomy *in/idā*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal, indicate the predominance of *in* over *idā* and note, in regard to the verbal forms, the exclusive presence of the perfect in the *law* systems (or very rarely of the imperfect indicative) while noting the classical verbal possibilities in the case of *in*¹⁶. It is the same for Moïnfar, as quoted by Abi Aad¹⁷ (see above footnote 12), Kouloughli, 1994, Neyreneuf et Al-Hakkak, 1996 or moreover, as expected, the latest French teaching manual for Arabic, *Kullo Tamâm* (Tahhan, 2007), which continues with a classical presentation and whose perspective is more prescriptive than descriptive. On the contrary, that these phenomena are more or less unknown in *modern* grammars of Modern Arabic, grammars that aim to be more *descriptive* of a modern, concrete state, is what seems strange.

Beeston (Beeston, 2006 : 94-97) does record the replacement of *in* by *idā*. For him the arabic conditional clauses are not marked by the verb form, but by the particle used. Therefore, he remains with the classical dichotomy. Without mentioning *in*, he only shows perfects or jussives and reports the systematic nature of *fa-* in the case of system "breaks". For *law*, he once again only records perfects and then notes the ambiguity between the Present and Past Unreal. Finally, the occurrence of *la-* is presented as optional.

Holes (Holes, 2004 : 292-299) seems to note, but without making it systematic, that *idā* accepts in apodosis verbal forms other than the simple and classical *fa'ala* (Holes, 2004 : 296-297). According to him, "The salient features of conditional sentences in MSA are the sequence of verb forms used and the particles used to introduce the conditional clause (the protasis) and, in some types of sentences, the answering clause (the apodosis) (Holes, 2004 : 293). Nevertheless, the author continues: "But, unlike English, the type of condition – real, possible or unreal – is signaled chiefly by the particle used to introduce the conditional clause, rather than verb form *per se*" (Holes, 2004 : 293)¹⁸. He then concludes: "Thus the different shades of probability of a conditional clause being fulfilled are signaled in written Arabic by the choice of particle and not, as in English, by the form of the verb" (Holes, 2004 : 294). Yet he no longer speaks of MSA but of CLA (Classical Arabic). Going back to MSA, he states that "the reality is different" (Holes, 2004 : 295). He does record that *in* is now mainly used in concessive clauses (*wa-in*) or subordinate clauses like ... – *in fa'ala/lam yaf'al* – ... (Holes, 2004 : 295). Therefore it is *idā* which replaces the latter in the expression of Potential (Holes, 2004 : 296)¹⁹, and the author then retains the classic dichotomy *idā/in*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal (Holes, 2004 : 296). However, he records, in the case of *idā*, apodoses in *fa'ala*, *yaf'alu* and *fa-sawfa-yaf'alu*, which is

¹⁶. For a look at the possible verbal combinations in the field of the classical operator *in*, see Zamaḥṣarī (Al-), 1999 : 416.

¹⁷. Moïnfar, 1973 : 123, 129.

¹⁸. According him Real seems to signify Eventual, possible, Potential and unreal Unreal

¹⁹. That the author calls "*open*" conditional.

rarely the case in other grammars, and links it to the Arabic dialects. He notes that in these: a. the colloquial equivalent of *in* has almost disappeared, relegated to expressions such as *in šā'a llāh*, to the benefit of the colloquial equivalent of *idā*, and b. the verbal sequence of Potential systems (Holes, 2004 : 298)²⁰ is essentially *fa'ala... yaf'alu* (Holes, 2004 : 298) which is ambiguous without a context (Holes, 2004 : 298).

Schulz, Krahel, and Reuschel (Schulz *et al.*, 2008 : 362-376) record the relegation of *in* to second place after *idā*, and retain the classic dichotomy *idā*-Potential (Schulz *et al.*, 2008 : 362 onwards) vs *law*-Unreal (Schulz *et al.*, 2008 : 366 onwards). Furthermore, if they record structures such as *fa-sa/sawfa-yaf'alu* as apodoses of *idā* systems, they only mention perfects in the case of *law*. On the other hand, their presentation systematizes the emergence of *fa-* in the classic cases (*lan*, *qad*, *laysa*, *sa-* and *sawfa*, and *inna* + [*pro*]name) (Schulz *et al.*, 2008 : 363-364). The authors thus finally show the non-systematic nature of *la-*. The examples seem mostly invented rather than authentic.

Buckley (Buckley, 2004 : 540, 668, 731-750) also presents the classic dichotomy *in/idā*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal, but he paraphrases some *idā fa'ala... fa'ala* systems in the Present Unreal. Moreover, he records for the *idā* systems apodoses of varied verbal forms (*yaf'alu*, *sa-yaf'alu* and *fa'ala*), and points, by use of an example, to the occurrence of a *la-* in an *idā* system (Buckley, 2004 : 737). Concerning *law*, he only gives examples of *law fa'ala... fa'ala* systems (except for two *law yaf'alu... la-fa'ala*, one paraphrased in the Present Unreal, and the other in the Past Unreal), but nevertheless specifies that *la-* is not systematic in these cases. Furthermore, his translations reproduce the usual ambiguity between the Present Unreal and the Past Unreal. It is only under the section devoted to the presence of *fa-* that the author offers three examples of apodosis of *law* systems that are not in *fa'ala*: one is in *fa-lan yaf'ala*, the second one is in *fa-sawfa yaf'alu*, and the last is in *fa-inna-hu sa-yaf'alu*. Regarding *law*, no apodosis in *yaf'alu* is therefore reported. Finally, the appearance of *fa-* conforms to classical rules on the issue, but it is perceived by the author as non-systematic (Buckley, 2004 : 748).

Badawi, Carter and Gully (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 40, 623-624, 632-670) note the disappearance of *in* not only to the benefit of *idā* but also of *law*; these authors say that CA *law* 'if (unreal)' has expanded to cover some of the functions of *in* 'if (real)' as the latter falls increasingly into disuse" (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 636, 647). They record moreover the use of *idā* in syntaxes imitating that of *law*²¹. In doing so, the authors add nuance to the sacrosanct classic dichotomy. In *law* systems linked to the Unreal, the verbal forms given by authors for the protasis and apodosis are those of the imperfect. Thus they have the *law fa'ala... fa'ala* syntax retain its classic ambiguity between Present and Past Unreal (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 645). However, concerning the *law* systems that are "synonymous of *in*" the apodoses can be paraphrased in (*fa*)-*sa-yaf'alu* (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 647). The authors therefore present two verbal forms for *law*: *fa'ala* and (*fa*)-*sa-yaf'alu*. For *idā*, they offer three different verb forms for the apodosis: *fa'ala*, *yaf'alu* and *sa-yaf'alu* (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 653-654). *Fa-* is presented as quasi-systematic with *idā* under the same conditions as with the classical *in*. *La-* is, according to the authors, generally present in *law* systems.

Alosh (Alosh, 2005 : 270-272) reproduces the classic dichotomy *idā/in*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal, noting that *idā* should be followed by a perfect verb and that its apodosis can be either *fa'ala* or *yaf'alu*. The author paraphrases the two syntaxes in the same way (Alosh, 2005 : 218). No mention is

²⁰. Called "open" conditional sentence[s].

²¹. Badawi *et al.* assert that *idā* then has the "same syntax and sense as *law*" (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 656). Nevertheless, as we will see thanks to the data provided by our corpus, this statement is true only if we add "when considered in classical Arabic where *law fa'ala... la-fa'ala* is neutral as to meaning between Present and Past Unreal "or if we specify "has the same syntax as the Classical Arabic Unreal's *law* and the same sense as the Modern Standard Arabic Present Unreal's *law*".

made of *fa-*. As to *law*, the system is presented as fixed in the form *law fa'ala... la-fa'ala* with the occurrence of *la-* obligatory. Thus the author does not record apodoses in *sa-yaf'alu*, neither for *idā* nor for *law*.

Ryding (Ryding, 2005 : 671-676) also remains very "classic" in her presentation of the traditional dichotomy *idā/in*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal. She writes: "Arabic uses *different particles* to express possible conditions and impossible conditions" (Ryding, 2005 : 671) with supporting references in her footnotes that border on modernity: Peled, Cantarino, Blachère and Gaudefroy-Demombynes, Fischer... (Ryding, 2005 : footnote 2 : 671). She only offers, for *law*, *fa'ala/lam yaf'al* structures, in protasis as well as in apodosis (Ryding, 2005 : 675). She indicates the general, but not the systematic, nature of *la-*. Nothing is said about the negation of the apodosis, nor about the presence - or not - of *la-* in this case. *Idā* is presented as having nowadays replaced *in*. Concerning *idā*, whose protasis is in *fa'ala*, she specifies that a rupture (Ryding, 2005 : 672) may appear in the apodosis, *i.e.* a tense other than *fa'ala*. However she does only give three examples: a defensive, a injunctive and a prepositional phrase introduced by *fa-* (*fa-'alay-ka an*). In doing so, she does not present, for *idā*, apodoses in *yaf'alu* nor in *sa-yaf'alu*.

Hassanein (Hassanein, 2006 : 98-100) certainly registers a syntax *idā fa'ala... fa-sa-yaf'alu*, but translates it in the same manner as *idā fa'ala... fa'ala*. In addition to replicating the strict dichotomy *idā/in*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal, she does not mention, in the case of *law*, any apodosis in *yaf'alu* nor in *sa-yaf'alu*. She contents herself with saying that *law* is followed by a perfect verb (protasis), but does not specify anything for the apodosis while her examples, nevertheless, only show for the latter *fa'ala*. Still in the case of *law*, *la-* is presented as necessary before a perfect verb and as optional before a negative form which, according to her, must be in *mā fa'ala*, not in *lam yaf'al*. Finally, *fa-* is presented as systematically used in the case where the apodosis is neither a perfect nor a jussive²² and as obligatory where there are no perfect verbs for *idā* (Hassanein, 2006 : 98). We should note that her examples also do not seem genuine.

McCarus (McCarus, 2007 : 149-152) does not, for his part, record the apodosis in anything other than *fa'ala* for *idā/in* and *law*, and adheres to the strict dichotomy *idā/in*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal. Like others, he notes that *idā* has taken over *in*; the former signifies more realisable conditions, while *in* would suggest a hypothesis in the true sense of the word. Here again, the examples are not authentic.

Conclusion: The authors of these Modern Arabic grammars 1) retain more often the classical dichotomy *idā/in*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal, 2) show, in the vast majority of cases, apodoses only in *fa'ala* and almost never in *yaf'alu* nor in *sa-yaf'alu*, or if it is so, almost never for *law*, but only for *idā*, and 3) consider, more generally, that *la-* is not systematic and that *fa-*, on the contrary, is in cases where the verb of the apodosis is neither a perfect nor a jussive introduced by the *lam* of negation. Of these grammars, Buckley and Badawi *et al.* especially stand out due to the number and authenticity of their examples, which allow us to see a reality that is far more complex than any of the others show. Most of the latter simply content themselves to recording the replacement of *in* by *idā* without offering any system that could be descriptively adequate to the reality of the uses. Nonetheless, Buckley, Badawi *et al.* do not actually organize these structures into a coherent system and are thus forced to interpret identical structures in various different ways²³.

^{22.} Case of *in*. See Hassanein : 99.

^{23.} Thus, for example, in Buckley (Buckley, 2004 : 739-740), the structure *law fa'ala... fa'ala*, classically interpreted as a case containing ambiguity between the Present Unreal and the Past Unreal; here we see only, in what emerges from our study, a Past Unreal. Alternatively there is the structure *idā fa'ala... fa'ala* interpreted as Present Unreal and Potential (Buckley, 2004 : 734 and 737) where we do not interpret it as Potential.

As we see, the first observations from our corpus do not correspond to the majority of the descriptions of hypothetical systems of Modern Arabic given by the recent grammars of the Modern Standard language. We will now detail our observations in order to identify a system that seems to us coherent.

3. Data Presentation

1. The Eventual

For the Eventual, *idā* (33 cases out of 37), with *idā mā* (4/37), is indeed the majority operator, and thus continues to express the Eventuals classically.

1. Present Eventual: *idā fa'ala... yaf'alu*

That this syntax describes the Eventual will be highlighted by a first example with *idā mā*, which operates in the same way as *idā*, *idā mā fa'ala... yaf'alu* in being presented as the equivalent of '*inda-mā yaf'alu... yaf'alu* which is, itself, only interpreted as an Eventual:

(1) *wa-idā mā fa'ala aḥadu-hum, fa-inna-hu yuḏṭarru bi-l-ṭab'i ilā rtiqā'i l-daraḡi, wa-'inda-mā yablugu l-ṭābiqa l-aḥīra takūnu ḥuṭuwātu-hu qad abṭa'at minā l-ta'abi* (Al-Laḡna : 53)

"As soon as one of them does/has done it then he is naturally obliged to climb the stairs, and when he reaches the top floor, his steps are slowed with fatigue"

(2) *idā 'alā ṣawtu raḡulin yaṭlubu l-isrā'a li-talbiyati ṭalabi-hi, huna yanḡuru ilay-hi wa-yuṣīru bi-ra'si-hi iṣaratan wāḥidatan mūgazatan : " -mšī.."* (Al-Zaynī : 240)

"If/when someone raises his voice urging him to serve him, he looks at him at once and makes a simple gesture of the head: "Back off. . . ! ""

(3) *ammā idā qārabati l-intihā'a fa-inna l-ṣarikata taqūmu bi-i'ādati ta'bi'ati-hā dāḡila akyāsin taḡmilu -sma-hā wa-ta'rīḡa i'ādati l-ta'bi'ati* (Ḍat : 271)

"And when they are close to being outdated, the company repackages them in bags bearing its name and the date of the repackaging"

(4) *wa-idā fuṣīla l-hindī lā yaṣkū wa-inna-mā yabḡaṭu fī hudū'in 'an 'amalin āḡara* (Warda : 17)

"And when the Indian is dismissed, he does not complain and simply searches quietly for another job"

(5) *idā taṣāḡarat imra'atun ma'a zawḡi-hā lā taqṣidu bayta ahli-hā ṣākiyatan inna-mā talḡa'u ilay-ka wāṭiqatan bi-anna mā laḡiqa bi-hā min ḡulmin sa-yazūlu* (Al-Numūr : 33)

"When a woman quarrels with her husband, she does not go to his parents complaining, but she takes refuge with you, confident that the injustice towards her will pass"

(6) *idā takallamat tanfatīḡu l-naḡsu kulliyyatan* (Al-ḡāziya : 70)

"When she speaks, the soul opens itself up completely"

If Badawi *et al.* have noted the existence of this syntax, they have at least suggested that its meaning is not obvious. Thus, they translate this syntax as both as a Potential (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 654) and as an Eventual (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 661). For some of their examples, we would have opted for an Eventual. This is particularly the case with *ma'a dālika* (sic) **idā ḥaraḡa** minhā fī riḥlatin aw ziyāratin ilā makānin mā min al'ālamī **narāhu** lā yaḥšā l-iḥtināqa ka-asmāki l-baḥri min hādā l-ḥurūḡi, however, if he leaves it for traveling or to visit any place in the world we find [lit. "see"] that he does not fear being stifled like the fish of the sea do in this way (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 653-654). For our part we translate as follows: "however, when he leaves it for traveling or to visit any place in the world, we see that he does not fear being stifled like the fish of the sea do". Nevertheless, it remains that of the 35 systems in *idā* whose apodosis is in (fa-)yaf'alu form, 22 actually designate the Eventual, but 13, that is to say 37.14%, designate the Potential. It seems here that only the context can help to distinguish between *idā fa'ala... yaf'alu* for the Present Eventual and *idā fa'ala... yaf'alu* for the Potential.

2. Past Eventual: *idā fa'ala... fa'ala*

Before considering the majority syntax for the expression of the Past Eventual, and to link this point to the previous point, we should note that this expression can be formed, as in Classical Arabic, with the syntax of a present Eventual placed in the field of a perfect verb (most commonly *kāna*). This is shown by the following example, which is in parallel here also with *'inda-mā* but, this time, in a *q if p* sequence:

(7) *wa-kānati l-baḡatu tušī'u fī kiyānī 'inda-mā yaqa'u naẓarī 'alay-hā wa-yaḡtāhu-nī l-ya'su idā lam aḡid-hā* (Warda : 56)

"Delight would irradiate in my being whenever my eye fell on her and despair would overwhelm me when I could not find her"

Another example, this time from Badawi *et al.*, also puts into play *kāna* and its sisters to express habitual actions: *kuntu idā waṣaltu ilā l-munḥanā 'inda furni l-ḡaḡḡi Nāṣif altafitu ilā l-ḡalfi*, whenever I used to reach the corner at Hajj Nasif's bakery I would look behind me (Badawi : 662). Now let us see the alternative offered by the system:

(8) *ra'aytu-hum yuzīḥūna l-aṭqāla 'an dawābbi-him kulla-mā tawaqqafa bi-him al-sabīlu l-abadī ḡattā idā faraḡū min dawābbi-him wa-ṭma'annū 'alā dawī-him habbū li-naḡdati aqraba man ḡāwara-hum li-yu'inū 'alā amri-hi* (Malakūt : 130)

"I saw them removing the loads from their animals at each time they encountered an interruption along the Everlasting Way. So much so that when they had finished with their cattle and were assured of their relatives, they rose to rescue the nearest neighbor and help him with his business"

(9) *wa-kāna idā arāda l-ṭā'ama taṭaḡhara la-hu ka-taṭaḡhuri-hi li-l-iḡrāmi* (Ḥaddaṭa : 96)

where the auxiliary verb *kāna* provides the interpretation of the Past Eventual²⁴:

"And when he wanted food, he would purify himself for it as he would for the state of ritual consecration"

(10) *idā taḥaddaṭa l-sukkānu* 'an buṭūlati-him *taḥaddaṭū* bi-basāṭatin wa-tawāḍu'in muḍḥilayni ! ma'a anna-hum samaw bi-buṭūlati-him ilā mustawā l-maṭali l-sā'iri (Al-Ġāziya : 37)

"When people spoke of their heroism, they did so with disconcerting simplicity and humility! And this despite the fact that they have raised their heroism to the level of a proverb!"²⁵

In modern Arabic, however, the emergence of a new layer does not necessarily cancel *de facto* the previous one. Then, interpretation of data remains difficult and some *idā fa'ala... fa'ala* may be interpreted as Present Eventual. Thus, Badawi *et al.* interpret *idā ā'gaba-nī kitābun tamannaytu law iqtanaytu-hu* as a Present Eventual: "if a book pleases me I wish I owned it" (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 653); we would have read it in the past: "When a book pleased me I wished I owned it"²⁶. Similarly they interpret as Present Eventual both *idā fa'ala... yaf'alu* and *idā fa'ala... fa'ala*: *idā ḥaraġati l-asmāku mina l-baḥri tamūtu bi-l-iḥtināqi*, "when the fish come out of the sea they die of asphyxiation" (Badawi : 661) and *idā sami'a aḍāna l-faġri fī hudū'i l-layli ṭariba l-qalbu*, "when he hears the dawn prayer call in the calm of the night his heart rejoices". For our part we would have interpreted the second as having a Past Eventual meaning: "Whenever he heard the dawn prayer call in the calm of the night his heart would rejoice".

II. The Potential: *idā fa'ala... (fa-)sa-yaf'alu* and *law fa'ala... yaf'alu*

In, despite a tentative incursion into the Past Unreal field, continues only to express the Potential, regardless of the syntax of the verb forms that follow it. Concerning the latter, it is essentially this that sets the tone, and not the syntax of the apodosis. It represents nevertheless only 19.23% of Potential systems; *idā*, as was pointed out long ago, now mostly expresses the Potential with 67.95%. However, what to our knowledge is almost never mentioned, except quite remarkably by Badawi *et al.*, is the significant appearance of *law* in this hypothetical status (12.82%).

1. In: variable syntax

²⁴. The French version presents a printmistake saying Present Unreal.

²⁵. The context is that of a narrative in the past: *ma'a anna l-qaryata kāfaḥat, šamadat, waqafat fī waġhi l-ḡulmi, baytan baytan, fardan fardan, lākin bi-dūni ḥiqdin. Al-šambiṭu nafsū-hu 'inda-mā umira bi-l-istiḡāli -staqāla. Wa-lammā ḡā'a l-istiqlālu wa-umira bi-l-'awdati 'āda... Idā taḥaddaṭa l-sukkānu...* ("despite the fact that the village fought, resisted, stood up in front of the oppression, house after house, individual after individual, but without hatred. The «garde-champêtre» himself when ordered to resign resigned. And when independence came and they ordered him to return he returned... When people were speaking...

²⁶. As we shall see, it could also be interpreted as a Present Unreal, meaning "If I liked a book, I would wish I owned it".

The syntax remains classic, with *fa'ala/lam yafal* or *yafal/lā yafal*²⁷ in protasis as well as in apodosis and with the appearance of *fa-* in the beginning of the apodosis as it appeared in Classical Arabic, except that an innovation has shown up: an apodosis in *sa-yafalu* and its negative counterpart *lan yafala* both juxtaposed with the protasis without being separated from the latter by *fa-*. This innovation is certainly imitated from the syntax of European languages.

(11) *in tazawwaġtu bi-ki u'ti-ki kulla mā yumkinu an yaḍumma qalbī min ḥubbin* (Al-Ġāziya : 71) = *in fa'ala... yafal*

"If I marry you, I'll give you all the love my heart can contain"

(12) *wa-in lam yastaṭī' kabīru l-baṣṣāšīna l-utmānliyyīna hādā fa-lā yastaḥiqqu manšiba-hu* (Al-Zaynī : 230) = *in fa'ala... fa-yafalu*

"And if the Ottoman Grand Master can not do this, then he does not merit his title"

(13) *yataḥallā 'ani l-dunyā li-ann-hu in lam yataḥalla 'ani l-dunyā fa-inna l-dunyā sawfa tataḥalla 'an-hu* (Malakūt : 61) = *in fa'ala... fa-inna-hu sa-yafalu*

"He gives up life for if he does not give it up, it will give him up"

(14) *fa-in lam yataḥaqqaqi l-amalu hullu-hu ba'da dālika fa-l-masīratu lam tantahi* (Ḥaddaṭa : 31) = *in fa'ala... fa-inna-hu fa'ala*

"If all hope is not realized after that, then the march is not over"

fa-, while assuming a role of focalisation on the logical subject of the verb, forbids the interpretation of the verb in a future sens. If we had have *lam tantahi l-masīratu*, the meaning would have been "the march will not end", but in the case of *fa-lam tantahi l-masīratu* or of *fa-l-masīratu lam tantahi*, we then have "the march is not ended/the march, it is not ended"

(15) *in arkaba bna-hu 'alā baġlatin uḥrā fa-lā ya'manu 'alay-hi min 'aṭratin aw šay'in yuḥīfu-hā fa-taqfiza watar-miya bi-hi ilā l-hāwiyati* (Al-Ġāziya : 189)

"If he raises his son onto another mule, then there is nothing to prevent it stumbling or being frightened by something, and then falling and rushing him toward the abyss"

(16) *in naġā 'inda bābin lan yanġuwa 'inda l-abwābi l-uḥrā llatī taḥrusu-hā l-fataḥātu l-mawġūdatu 'inda l-abwābi l-tāliyati la-hā* (Warda : 36) = *in fa'ala... sa-yafalu* where *fa-* does not occur.

"If he escapes from one door, he will not escape from the others which are guarded by the loopholes that are at the doors which follow them"

(17) *in dahaba huwa sa-ya'tī man yaḥlufu-hu* (Al-Ġāziya : 187) = *in fa'ala... sa-yafalu* where *fa-* does not occur.

²⁷. Not seen, however, in our corpus. The only positive apocopate found in our corpus is in apodosis. See example below (11).

"If he goes, there will come one who will succeed him"

2. *idā: idā fa'ala... (fa-)sa-yaf'alu*

If Badawi *et al.* clearly show that *idā* can be a "pure conditional" that is to say a Potential, they offer only a single syntax, *idā fa'ala... fa'ala* (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 653). However, in our corpus, we have already reported that *idā fa'ala... fa'ala* belonged, according to the context, either to the Past Eventual or to the Present Unreal. Thus, none of the examples placed under the heading "*idā* 'if' as a pure conditional" account what we see in our corpus, and these examples should, we believe, be reinterpreted in the Present Unreal (see below). It is in the next section, entitled "variant forms of verb in apod.", a section which appears to complete the first, that we find two other syntaxes: *idā fa'ala... yaf'alu* and *idā fa'ala... sa-yaf'alu* which also are paraphrased by Potentials. Concerning *idā fa'ala... yaf'alu*, if it indeed expresses the Potential (37.14%), it also and more importantly expresses, as we have shown, the present Eventual (62.86%). There is therefore, on pages 653-654, only one example which is indeed a Potential and whose English translation respects the meaning. This example also happens to have an *idā fa'ala... sa-yaf'alu* syntax, in accordance with what our corpus has allowed us to demonstrate. This is the statement: *wa-idā sa'alta-nī l-āna li-māddā wāṣaltu l-taradduda 'alā 'iyādati-hi ba'da an ṣāraḥa-ni bi-dālika wa-li-māddā lam adhab l-'iyādata ṭabībin āḥara sa-yakūnu ḡawābī...*, and if you ask me now why I continued to go to his clinic after he clearly told me about that and why I did not go to some other doctor's clinic, my answer will be... That we understand the same way.

(18) *wa-idā taḡāhala-hu fa-la-sawfa ya'rifu kayfa yahtadī ilā awwali l-ṭarīqi ka-mā htadā l-kaṭīrūna* (Riḡāl : 46). Note the presence of an infix *lām* between *fa-* and the future particle *sawfa*. This *lām* probably has a corroborative value (*lām al-tawkid*)

"And if he pretends to ignore it, then he will necessarily find how to reach the beginning of the road as did so many others"²⁸

(19) *wa-idā tabata anna-hu ḡalama maḥlūqan, sa-yaqbalu ayya qiṣāṣin yaqa'u 'alay-hi ka-ayyi maḥluqin* (Al-Zaynī : 249)

"And if it turns out that he has been unjust towards anyone, he will be ready to pay for it as a simple mortal"²⁹

(20) *wa-idā kunta ṭayyiban fa-sa-tardā* (Al-Āṣiq : 40)

"And if you're good, then you'll love"

(21) *idā dahabtumā l-laylata li-taḥrībi qabri l-waliyyi wa-ṣaḡarati-hi fa-sa-yahkumu 'alay-kumā bi-l-maḥqi* (Al-Āṣiq : 92)³⁰

²⁸ It is not a question here of a concessive clause, which might imply the presence of the prefixed *wa-* to *idā*, but the context requires us not to consider this *wa-* as anything other than a coordination conjunction between two hypothetical statements: "If Zakariyā helped him it would be better, and if he pretends to ignore it, then he will necessarily find how to reach..."

²⁹ Same remark as for example (18).

"If you both go tonight to destroy the tomb of the saint and his tree, then he will condemn you to death"

(22) *wa-idā lam tadḥabi l-āna fa-sa-aṭlubu mina l-mumarrīdi an yulqiya bi-ka ilā l-šāri'i* (Al-Lağna : 117)

"And if you do not leave now, I'll ask the nurse to put you out on the street"

(23) *idā aradtum tarkanā lan a'tariḍa* (Warda : 313)

"If you want to leave, I will not be opposed to it"

(24) *idā lam ta'tarif sa-aḍribu-ka bi-l-ḥiḍā'i wa-aḍribu ahla ḥārati-ka* (Al-Numūr : 37)

"If you do not confess, I will smite thee with the shoe and beat the people of your neighborhood"

Note that the second verb, also interpreted as a future, is not introduced by a particle of the future. The latter is unnecessary because the verb is placed in the field of the future particle which introduces the first one and is coordinated with it by *wa-*.

(25) *idā lafaṭa-hu ḥawla 'unqi-ka sa-yakūnu rā'i'an* (Ḥiwār : 26)

"If you tie it around your neck, it will be great"

The hypothetical system is in the field of a past tense verb:

(26) *awhama-hu ba'ḍu l-sukkāni anna l-Ġāziyā sa-taḥḍuru l-zaradata, wa-anna-hā idā ra'ati bna-hu sa-ta'ṣāqu-hu fī l-ḥāli* (Al-Ġāziya : 26)

"Some residents made him believe that Al-Ġāziya would be present at the party, and that if she saw her son, she would fall in love with him immediately"

(27) *fa-l-buyūtu fī sīrati-hā l-ūlā lam tanḥaḍ 'ani l-arḍi li-tataṭalla'a ilā l-samāwāti li-takūna muğarrada ma'wan li-anna-hā idā faqadat huwiyyata-hā l-aṣliyyata llatī anwī an uḥaddiṭa-kum 'an-hā fa-lan yakūna bayna-hā wa-bayna l-maṭwā farqun* (Malakūt : 99)

"The houses in their early development did not rise from earth to aspire to heaven to be simple shelters, because if they lost their original identity, about which I want to talk to you, there would be no difference between them and a mere dwelling-place"

3. Law: *law fa'ala... yafalu*

Badawi *et al.* note, in a specific section, that *law* may now have, in Modern Written Arabic (MWA), the meaning of Potential: *law 'if' can occur with the sense of 'in 'if', thus losing its counterfactual quality* (Badawi : 647-648)³¹. But of the five quoted examples, we exclude the first, non doubly verbal, which does not pertain to our purpose. Of the remaining four, the authors present to us the following syntaxes: 1) *law fa'ala... fa-lan yafala*, 2) *law fa'ala... lan-yafala*, 3) *law fa'ala... yafalu* and 4) *law fa'ala... la-fa'ala*. We have, that is to say, three verbal forms of apodosis: (*fa-*)*sa-yafalu*, *yafalu* and *fa'ala*. Howev-

31.

er, only examples 1) and 2) are actually paraphrased as Potential while examples 3) and 4) are put in the Present Unreal. We agree with these authors for examples 1) and 2), even though we shall insist that the *law fa'ala... (fa-)sa-yafalu* syntax, as it is the case for its English and French equivalents, presents a case of ambiguity between the Potential and the Present Unreal (See below, footnote 121 and Table 3, footnote 156) [New footnote : This is not in the French version and presents a nuance of what was said there]. Then we propose to reinterpret the syntax *law fa'ala... (fa-)sa-yafalu* of examples 1) and 2) as Present Unreal, as we shall see³².

The authors only distinguish between Eventual (Temporal), Potential (Conditional) and Past Unreal (Counterfactual). They are therefore led, in case 4), to classify as Conditional, "with an unlikely future sens, retaining the syntaxe used in contrefactual sentences (Badawi : 647), a sentence like *law utiḥa li-l-šu'ubi l-'arabiyyati an tusammiya l-za'ima l-aktara ša'biyyatan fi hāḍihi l-āwinati la-aqābat...* which they translate as a Present Unreal: *if the Arab people were given [the opportunity] to name the most popular leader during these times, [then] they would answer...* (Badawi et al., 2004 : 648)³³.

This leaves then only one example that Badawi et al. classify as Conditional, and which we believe is, both syntactically and semantically, actually a Potential, but which the authors translate as if it were an Present Unreal. This example is the following: *law 'alimat bi-l-amri yumkinu an taṭluba min-hu an yuṭalliqa-hā*, *if she were to find out about the matter she could [lit."it would be possible that"] ask him to divorce her*, which we translate for our part as a Potential: "if she finds out about the matter she will [lit."it will be possible that"] ask him to divorce her". Let us now give a few examples from our corpus.

(28) *law wuḡida bayna l-ḥabibi wa-mubtaḡā-hu 'aqābātun ya'mulu hadma-hā, aḡ'alu min-hā mustaḥīlan lā yumkinu taḥaṭṭī-hi* (Al-Zaynī : 287)

"If there should occur between the lover and his desire obstacles which he hopes to destroy, I'll create an obstacle that can not be overcome"

(29) *law naẓarnā ilā dā'irati l-mašriqi l-'arabiyyi l-muntigati l-ra'isiyyati li-l-bitrūli, wa-llatī bi-hā 60 bi-l-mi'ati min kulli mā ladā l-'ālamī mina l-bitrūli naḡidu anna asāsan ra'isiyyan min istrātīḡiyyati-hā huwa...* (Dāt : 32)

"If you look at the Arab East, the leading oil producer and holder of 60 per cent of the world reserves, we see that the foundation of its strategy is..."

(30) *law qaṭa'nā l-šaḡarata wa-dafannā ra'sa l-waliyyi fa-la'alla-nā nastariddu abšāra-nā wa-asmā'a-nā* (Al-Āšiq : 92)

³². We propose then to translate *wa-law sa'alta aḥada-hum min ayna atayta bi-hādā l-ḥaqqi... fa-lan taḡida raddan*, and *if you ask one of them where did he get this truth from... [then] you will not find an answer* (Badawi : 647) as and *if you asked one of them where did he get this truth from... [then] you would not find an answer* and to translate *law daḥalnā sibāqa tasalluḥin nawawiyyin fi l-minṭaqati lan yantahiya*, *if we enter a nuclear arms race in the region it will never [lit. will not] end* (Badawi et al., 2004 : 647) as *if we entered a nuclear arms race in the region it would never [lit. would not] end*.

³³. However, given the syntactic regularities offered by our corpus, it seems possible to infer that this sentence, whose syntax is *law fa'ala... la-fa'ala* falls within the Past Unreal (and not the Present) and therefore its meaning is: "if the Arab people had been given [the opportunity] to name the most popular leader during these times, [then] they would have answered... See below.

"If we cut down the tree and bury the saint's head, then maybe we will regain our vision and our hearing"

Here, *la'alla*, which marks the modality of possibility, confirms that *law* does mark the Potential.

(31) *law tabata hādā taqa'u kāriṭatun* (Warda : 112)

"If it actually happens, it will be a disaster"

(32) *law kāna ra'su l-ḡanīni fī l-aysari yakūnu waladan* (Warda : 361)

"If the head of the foetus is on the left side, it will be a boy"

III. The Unreal

Concerning the Past Unreal it is *law* that classically expresses it (98.86%). As for the Present Unreal, if it is essentially and classically expressed through its historic operator *law* (40.74%), it is also through *idā* (*mā*) which appears in force in this hypothetical category (59.26%), as Badawi *et al.* timidly note (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 656)³⁴. Moreover, it appears that of the 47 systems in *idā fa'ala... fa'ala*, which are classically linked to Eventual and Potential, only 8 really belong there, and then only for the Potential. Therefore only 17.02% of *idā fa'ala... fa'ala* actually describe a hypothetical category conforming with that described in the Classical Arabic grammars, while 82.98% of them describe the Present Unreal - which does not conform! Further, as we reported earlier, *la-* is not systematic with *idā*, appearing only in 4.16% of the cases without further input than to emphasise the beginning of the apodosis. On the other hand, it appears much more regularly in the case of the *law* Past Unreal, in fact in 87.35% of the occurrences.

1. Present Unreal: *idā fa'ala... (la-) fa'ala* and *law fa'ala... (fa-)sa-yaf'alu*

a. *idā*

Of examples given by Badawi *et al.*, three must be, according to us, reinterpreted as Present Unreal. It requires only one example to show this: *idā kāna kātibu l-inšā'i mulimman bi-miṭli haḍihi (sic) l-luḡāti kāna aqdara 'alā murāsalati-him, if the secretary of the chancellery was conversant with such languages as these he was more able to correspond with them [namely foreign people]* (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 653)³⁵. This, as we see, makes no sense. The translation given by Badawi *et al.* indeed does not work, for a semantic reason on one hand (and with regard to common sense, because what the secretary of the chancellery has been reproached about is precisely his lack of any foreign language...) and for a syntactic reason on the other hand. This is because, in order to interpret (despite the meaning) the second *kāna* as an imperfect or preterite, it would necessarily have required that *fa-* be prefixed to it; *fa-* which in these cases, never fails to distinguish a Perfect form verb/[or a] jussive introduced by *lam* from a verb with a Perfect form and sense. Thus this sentence can not be understood as anything other than the following: "If the secretary of the chancellery was more conversant with such lan-

³⁴. The authors evoke equally timidly the existence of a structure in *law fa'ala... (fa-)sa-yaf'alu*, which they interpret as *law fa'ala... yaf'alu*, and here we see a difference (see footnote above 109).

³⁵. We should note that Badawi *et al.* do not reference their examples.

guages [but this is not the case]³⁶, he would be more able to correspond with them". We will give other examples of this Present Unreal syntax in *idā*.

(33) *al-wāḥidu hunā lā yarā zawġata ṣadīqi-hi lākin idā qābala-hā fī Lunduna saharū ma'an* (Warda : 241)

"Here, a man does not see the wife of his friend, but if he met her in London, they would go out together"

Here, the restriction implied by *lākin* ("but"), that is to say the refutation of a present or future reality, indicates the interpretation as an Unreal.

(34) *idā waḍa'ta fī-hā gamalan taḥawwala ilā ṭayrin min ma'dinin yaṭīru aḫḍala min ayyi ṭayrin* (Al-Numūr : 60)

"If you put a camel there, it would turn into an iron bird flying better than any bird"

In this example, it is the absurdity that proves the Unreal status of the sentence.

(35) *fa-idā aḍafnā ilā dālika anna l-duwala l-'arabiyyata bi-ḥukmi imāni-hā bi-l-risālāti l-samāwiyyati wa-l-adyāni yaġ'alu-hā aqraba ilā l-ġarbi mina l-šarqi la-waġḍadnā anna ġamī'a hāḍihi l-asbābi tanfī...* (Dāt : 32)³⁷

"By adding that the Arab States, by virtue of their attachment to the revealed [Abrahamic] religions, feel closer to the West than the East, we would see that all of that would completely deny..."

It is clearly here the presence of the *lām* in imitation of the syntax of *law* which allows to interpret this as an Unreal, and specifically, because of *idā*, as a Present Unreal.

(36) *idā sādā-hu Zakariyā kāna dālika aḫḍala* (Riġāl : 46)

"If Zakariyā helped him, it would be better"

³⁶ We here draw attention to the fact that in languages like French, the phrase "S'il faisait beau, je sortirais" can be interpreted either as Potential ("If the weather is nice I will go out") or as Present Unreal ("If the weather was nice, I would go out"). It is therefore a case of ambiguity that only the context can remove. The intrinsic difference between Potential and Unreal indeed lies in the *necessary* existence of an implicit 'but' in the case of the Unreal ("but the weather is not/will not be nice" for the Present Unreal and "but the weather was not nice" for the Past Unreal). Then it is especially that 'but' that allows us to differentiate between the two meanings of the phrase "If the weather was nice, I would go out": the one of *direct speech*, with existence of a 'but', which is indeed a Present Unreal, and that of *reported speech*, which only has a syntactic form of Past Unreal for narrative reasons and because of the concordance of tenses, but not involving 'but', which would make it belong to the Potential. Let us consider the following sequence happening at night or in a closed room without knowledge of the weather: A.: "If the weather is nice, I will go out (Potential); B.: "What did A say? ; "C.: "He said that if the weather was nice he would go out" (Potential, because there is no 'but' that could afford to connect this sentence to Unreal). On the difference between direct speech and reported speech, see among others Abi Aad (Abi Aad, 2001 : especially 49-72).

³⁷ The syntax is not clear. Especially, we do not know what would be the subject of *yaġ'alu-hā*. Maybe there is here a misprint and it lacks an indefinite relative pronoun *mā* ("what makes them closer to West than to East...").

(37) *fa-idā dakarta la-nā asmā'a-hum, rubba-mā kāna li-dālika aṭarun fī tahfīfī l-amri bi-l-nisbati la-ka* (Al-Lağna : 94)

"If you told us their names, maybe it would mitigate your situation"

(38) *idā dahabtumā li-taḥrībi qabri l-waliyyi wa-šağarati-hi aḥadtu 'alā 'ātiqī iblāğa l-şurṭati* (Al-Āşiq : 92)

"If you were both going tonight destroy the tomb of the saint and his tree, I would take upon myself the responsibility of contacting the police"

(39) *fī waqtin ṭawīlin ra'ā nafsa-hu ḥāmila l-taqli l-fādihi, lā aḥada yu'īnu-hu 'alay-hi, ḥattā Maṣşūrun şāḥibu-hu, idā su'ila 'an aşḥābi-hi wa-zumalā'i-hi qāla lā fā'idata min-hum turğā* (Al-Zaynī : 259)

"For a long time he watched himself bearing the crushing weight. Nobody helped him, not even his friend Maṣşūr. If anyone asked him what he thought about his friends and colleagues, he would say that there was nothing to be expecting from them"

(40) *fa-fāda qalbu l-abī bi-l-fuḍūli fa-tasā'ala 'an sirri 'abaṭi l-aqdāri dūna an yadiya, fa-ağāba-hu l-ḥafā'u: sirru 'abaṭi l-aqdāri laysa hawan wa-lākinna-hu ğadalun lan ya'mala-hu illā şuḥbānu l-ḥāfiyati, li-anna l-aqdāra idā arādat bi-maḥlūqin şarran aḥyat-hu wa-idā şā'ati l-aqdāru bi-maḥlūqin ḥayran amātat-hu* (Malakūt : 79)

"The father's heart was then filled with curiosity and he questioned himself about the secret of the absurdity of fate, which he did not know. The secret then answered him: "The secret of the absurdity of fate is not a caprice but a debate that only companions of the secret will know; because fate, if it wanted to hurt a creature, would make it live, and if it wished it well, would make it die""

(41) *inna-hu yā Kahlānu idā kariha l-mar'u l-ḥaşra wa-l-qaşra ṭalaba kaṭrata l-yawmi wa-ştāqa l-'adada* (Haddaṭa : 150-151)

"Kahlān! If Man hated confinement and restriction, he would ask for abundance of the sea and would rejoice in such plentitude"

b. law

(42) *yā Sa'īdu anā maqtū'u l-amali mina l-mahdiyyi l-muntazari, law qāma nāṭiqu l-zamāmi, law zahara, law ğā'a mina l-ka'bati yuşhiru sayfa-hu l-dahabiyya, sa-yataşaddā la-hu Zakariyā, sa-yuḥarrimu-hu duḥūla l-diyāri* (Al-Zaynī : 256)

"Sa'īd, I lost hope of seeing the Messiah. If he rose, if he appeared, if he came from the Kaaba, brandishing his gold saber, Zakariyā would opposed him, he would prevent him from coming to us"

(43) *lawi -stimarrat sa-yastahīlu 'alay-nā muğādarati l-makāni* (Warda : 134)

"If ever [the bombing] continued, it would be impossible to go out"³⁸

³⁸. This sentence could take a Potential interpretation, if there were not an implicit *but*, *but they will not continue*, (the heroine, writing her diary at the end of the day, succeeding in stopping the bombing).

(44) *law ɖaraba-nī fa-sa-aqūlu li-abī fa-ya'tī wa-yaɖribu-hu* (Al-Numūr : 26)

"If he hit me, I would tell my father who would beat him"³⁹

2. Past Unreal

a. *law fa'ala... (la-)(mā) fa'ala*

La- is semi-systematically placed at the beginning of the apodosis, and even before the negation there of the latter (which is still, as is conventional, *mā fa'ala*), showing structures in *la-mā fa'ala*. The context given by the following example shows that although this syntax is linked to the Past Unreal, *lākin(na)* + perfect verb ("but" + past tense verb) leaves no doubt about the possible interpretation.

(45) *law sa'alta-nī 'an ɖālika la-dalaltu-ka 'alā ɖarīqatin ġiddi sahlatin, lā tukallifu ɖamanan! lākinna-ka fakkarta bi-ɖarīqati-ka* (Al-Ġāziya : 133)

"If you had asked me about this, I would have indicated to you a very easy method, which costs nothing! But you thought according to your method"

In the same manner as above, *lākinna* comes here to impose an Unreal and, associated with a past tense verb (*fakkarta*), a Past Unreal.

(46) *wa-rakaɖa l-awlādu bi-aqṣā quwwatin wa-lammā bta'adū waqafū lāhiṭina muḥmarri l-wuġūhi. qāla Muḥammadun: law amsaka-nā la-aṣṣba'a-nā ɖarban* (Al-Numūr : 62)

"The children ran as fast as they could. When they were far away, they stopped, panting, faces reddened. Muḥammad said: if he had caught us, he would have beaten us"

The context here shows that the only possible interpretation is that of the Past Unreal.

(47) *wa-law kāna mu'aqqadan bi-sababi lawni-hi ka-mā qāla Haykalun mā ġalasa bi-l-sā'āti kulla yawmin fī-šamsi* (Dāt : 38)

"If [Anwar al-Sadāt] had had a lot of hang ups about the color [of his skin], as Haykal said, he would not have spent hours in the sun every day "

(48) *la-qad fakkara wālidī bi-l-amri: law aġġara ġurfatayni wa-sakana ma'a zawġati-hi l-kashā'i fī l-tālītati idan la-aṣṣa mā tabaqqā la-hu mina l-ḥayāti mustaqirran* (Riġāl : 41)

"My father had thought about it: if he had rented two rooms and lived with his lamed wife in the third, then he would have lived out what remained of his life well installed"

(49) *wa-law ġā'a aḥadu-humā qabla l-āḥari aw ba'da-hu, la-marrati l-umūru fawqa saṭḥi ayyāmī miṭla-mā nzalaqa ālāfu l-awliya'i ilā nisyāni wa-lākinna-humā ġā'a ma'an* (Al-Āšiq : 77)

³⁹. Same remark as in (43). Compare again this syntax with that of the immediately preceding: cf. example below (46).

"If one of the two had come before the other, or after him, things would have moved on just as thousands of saints have slipped into oblivion; but they came together"

(50) **law saqaṭat** Raḥyūtu **dā'ati** l-minṭaḡatu l-muḥarraratu (Warda : 315)

"If ever Raḥyūt had fallen, the liberated area would have been lost"

(51) wa-lākin **law ra'aytumū**-hum wa-ta'ammaltum waḡūha-humu llatī tanḡaḡu bi-mā tusammūna-hu fī mu'ḡami-kum sa'ādatan **la-ayqantum** bi-ḡadwā riḡlati-him wa-āmantum bi-risālati (Malakūt : 128)

"But if you had seen them and had seen their faces which were perspiring with what you call happiness in your language, you would have been assured of the success of your journey, you would have believed in the prophecy"

(52) wa-**law šā'a la-amkana**-hu an yuqaddima qišṣata-hu bi-mitli mā qaddama bi-hi masrḡiyyata-hu l-Sudd (Ḥaddaṭa : 32)

"If only he had wanted, it would have been possible for him to present his story as he presented his play al-Sudd [The Dam]"

(53) wa-**law lam takun** qābilatan li-l-zawāḡi fī naḡari l-qaryati, **la-mā aqdama** l-šambīṭu 'alā ḡiṭbati-hi li-bni-hi (Al-ḡāziya : 28)

"And if she had not been fit for marriage in the eyes of the village, the garde-champêtre would not have undertaken to engage her to his son"

(54) wa-**law taraka**-hum **la-ḡā'ū**-hu bi-suyūfi-him (Al-Zayni : 299)

"If he had let them be, they would have come to him with their swords"

b. law fa'ala... kāna yaf'alu

Note finally that we find in Arabic press an alternative to *fa'ala* for the Past Unreal, *kāna sa-yaf'alu*, as Badawi *et al.* note (Badawi *et al.*, 2004 : 645-646), a solution of which we only have three occurrences in our corpus:

(55) 'iqābun āḡaru **law kāna 'tāda**-hu munḡu ṭalāṭi sanawātin **la-mā kāna**, al-āna 'alā l-aqalli, **yaktariṭu** bi-hi, miṭla-mā yaf'alu hāḡihi l-laḡzata (Al-Āšiq : 28)

"Another punishment: if he had not got used to him over three years, then he would not have been, now at least, preoccupied by him, as he is at the moment"

4. Data Analysis

It seems thus that we should replace the presentation of Modern Standard Arabic's hypothetical systems with another presentation, quite different from that of the grammars, regarding the language of this period.

Classically there were two particles attributed to the expression of conditional clauses, *in* and *law*⁴⁰. Later, the circonstant *idā*, initially reserved for the Eventual, gradually ousted *in* to supplant it in the expression of the Potential⁴¹. The classic distinction between operators allowed us to place in their fields verbal forms generally considered neutral from a temporal point of view⁴². It was generally *māḍī* (perfect) although it appears that the primary form of the *in* systems was the *muḍārīʿ mağzūm* (jussive)⁴³. All works consulted regarding Modern Standard Arabic continue to reproduce this strict dichotomy *idā*-Potential vs *law*-Unreal. Buckley puts it as follows: "The temporal meaning of the verb will depend on the meaning of the condition (Buckley, 2004 : 739). To that solely semantic criterion we oppose a syntactic criterion which is expressed thus: "On the temporal form of the verb of the apodosis (and therefore on its meaning) and the conditional particle will depend the significance of the condition".

Indeed, concerning Modern Arabic's hypothetical system, and this is the most prominent new feature, we observe at first, probably under the influence of an unique *if* (*si* in French, *if* in English), the synonymization⁴⁴ of Classical Arabic conditional operators. *Idā* has come to mean, in addition to its traditional tasks, and standing beside *law* for whom this role was historical, the Unreal (present), while *law*, in turn, also expresses the Potential as well as the Unreal.

The result of this synonymization is a necessary upheaval of the traditional system in which operators, and operators only, carried the meaning and permitted a conferral to the considered statement of one of the values involved (Eventual/Potential, Unreal). This upheaval is then reflected by the introduction of a kind of sequence of tenses, where the modern apodosis now gains a tense value. We can see that a system similar to our English (or French) sequence of tenses thus began, and have made note of it here⁴⁵:

⁴⁰. See Zamaḥṣarī (Al-), 1999 : 416. Regarding the semantical and not merely syntactical identification of *law* to *in* in the expression of the conditional clause, see Versteegh, 1991.

⁴¹. So much so that *in* is now juts in residual use (we find only 16 examples within our study, that is to say 5.65%), most commonly confined to a few idioms like *in šāʾa llah* or for the expression of concessive clauses (*wa-in*, but this is beyond our purpose which focuses on hypothetical systems).

⁴². With the exception that for his examples, Zamaḥṣarī (Al-), 1999 : 416, places in the field of *in*, specifying that it is used in the sense of the future ("*in*" *tagʿalu l-fiʿla li-l-istiqbāli wa-in kāna māḍiyan*) jussives (it is to say *muḍārīʿ*) and not the perfect: *in taḍrib-nī aḍrib-ka* ("if you hit me I'll hit you") and places in the field of *law*, specifying a *contrario* that it is used to express a condition in the past (*wa-"law" tagʿalu-hu li-l-māḍī wa-in kāna mustaqbilan*), perfects: *law ġiʿta-nī la-akramtu-ka* ("if you came/had come, I honored you/would have honored you"). In doing so, he still seems to retain for these so-called neutral verbal forms a certain tense value. Moreover Ayoub, 2003 notes the semantic implication of the speaker attached to *mağzūm* contrasting with the neutral utterance value of *māḍī*.

⁴³. As the first two examples given by Zamaḥṣarī (Al-), 1999 : 416 tend to show. Moreover, Pierre Larcher seems to favour a jussive origin of the hypothetical *in* systems, noting that one finds in fact very few systems *in faʿala... faʿala* in Quranic Arabic, and actually none *in faʿala... lam yafʿal* nor *in lam yafʿal... faʿala*; and the only denial of jussive *yafʿal* is *lā yafʿal*, the only negative system present in the Koran being *illā* [*< in + lā*] *yafʿal... lā yafʿal*. See Larcher, 2003a and Larcher, 2008.

⁴⁴. Which we believe we have shown, in a colloquial form of Arabic, Egyptian, the reality and the syntactic implications in Sartori, 2009.

⁴⁵. For the French, see Grévisse, 2001 or Riegel *et al.*, 2004 : 509.

Table 2. English sequence of tenses

Protasis		Apodosis				
if/ when	Preterite/Past Continuous	Preterite/Past Continuous		Past Eventual	"zero conditional"	Factual
if/ when	Present	Present		Present Eventual		
if	Present	Present Future (Simple or Continuous)				Factual
if	(Simple or Continuous)	Future (Simple or Continuous)		Potential	"first conditional"	
if		Conditional Continuous	Present/Conditional Present	Present Unreal ⁴⁶	"second conditional"	Counterfactual
if	Preterite/Past Continuous				"third conditional"	
if	Pluperfect/Pluperfect Continuous	Conditional Continuous	Perfect/Conditional Perfect	Past Unreal		

It is indeed likely that under the influence of European languages like French and English, the Arabic system of the expression of the conditional has changed.

The distinction between the different statuses of the conditional seems now to take place through a contrastive syntax, which moves the Arabic system closer to "sequence of tenses" systems like the above. Nevertheless, this sequence is not perfect (read: it is not a perfect imitation of systems such as the French or English for example), since the verb of the protasis retains its neutral temporal value: it is a perfect⁴⁷ in the field of an operator of the conditional to indicate that the statement is made in the framework of a hypothetical system. It is then the verb of the apodosis, the form of which is very different from that of hypothetical systems of Classical Arabic, which has a tense value to allow us to distinguish between the hypothetical statuses, and this pertains to the model of languages like French or English. This is no longer the operator only that demonstrates the meaning of a conditional clause, but rather the *relationship* between the operator and the verbal form of the apodosis. We are therefore no longer in an *essentialist* system as in CA, but in a *relational* one.

In the case of *idā*, the latter has retained an Eventual sense. In doing so, and in imitation of European languages, it has become natural, in the case of the Present Eventual, to use a *muḍārīʿ* which is the equivalent of French's indicative present tense in *si/quand il fait beau je sors* and the English present in "if/when the weather is nice I go out", and a *māḍī* in the case of the Past Eventual like *quand il faisait beau, je sortais*, "when the weather was nice I used to go out".

In this manner, for the Potential it was perhaps seen as more natural now to have, instead of the classic *fa'ala* with its non-temporal value, and by contrast to the latter (*fa'ala*), a semantic and syntactic future (*sa-yaf'alu*), which is the Arabic equivalent of the French future in *s'il fait beau je sortirai* and of the English future in "if the weather is nice I **will** go out".

In return, *idā* could retain in its field in apodosis a *māḍī* which would come then to designate the Present Unreal, the context here allowing a distinction from the Past Eventual.

⁴⁶. Case of ambiguity between the Potential and the Present Unreal. See above.

⁴⁷. Except very few *law yaf'alu*, the imperfect indicating here a Present Unreal.

Law retains for itself the anteriority in the expression of the Unreal. In imitation of European languages, the Present Unreal acquires the equivalent meaning of the French conditional in *s'il faisait beau* (*mais il ne fait pas beau*) *je sortirais* or English in "if the weather was nice (but it is not) I **would** go out", whose links with the indicative future form are evident. The form of the Arabic future *sa-yaf'alu*, equivalent to that *future* (respectively *-rais/would*) becomes conditional as the apodosis of *law*.

The Past Unreal could therefore only be designated by an apodosis of a past verbal form (*fa'ala* or *kāna sa-yaf'alu*) in the field of *law*.

It thus became possible to make a system in *law* express, on the model of *idā*, a third hypothetical status, the Potential, through the use of the last verbal form not yet used in apodosis, the *muḍārī' marfū'* (*yaf'alu*). Badawi *et al.* have noted this (2004 : 636, 647-648), although, as mentioned, we do not fully agree with them on the topic of their presentation data.

We arrived, so it seems to us, at the next state concerning the apodoses based on the operators observed:

Table 3. Verbal forms in the apodosis of the hypothetical system of Modern Literary Arabic

	Eventual	→	Potential	→	Present Unreal	→	Past Unreal
<i>idā</i>	(fa-)yaf'alu*	→	(fa-(inna-hu))sa-yaf'alu	→	fa'ala**		non-existent
<i>law</i>	non-existent		yaf'alu	→	(fa-(inna-hu))sa-yaf'alu***	→	(la-)fa'ala

* case of ambiguity between the Present Eventual and the Potential

** case of ambiguity between the Past Eventual and the Present Unreal

*** case of ambiguity between the Present Unreal and the Potential

5. Conclusion

The emergence of a new layer in modern Arabic does not necessarily invalidate the previous layer, which makes data interpretation difficult. It seems, however, that this is no longer only the operator that determines the meaning of the conditional clause, but the operator in *connection* with the verbal form of the apodosis. This verb is in charge of a temporal value where classically (and as is still the case today for the one verb of the protasis) it was a verbal form tending to be perfect and neutral from a temporal point of view. However this upheaval, even if it is visible over a period of forty years, seems not have allowed the system to regain full coherence, as the three major cases of ambiguity reflect: *idā fa'ala... fa'ala* (Past Eventual and Present Unreal), *idā fa'ala... yaf'alu* (Present Eventual and, less often, the Potential) and *law fa'ala... (fa-(inna-hu))sa-yaf'alu* (Present Unreal and less often the Potential). These cases of ambiguity, as we see, relate essentially to *idā* which also does not cover the whole core of the conditional (Potential and Unreal); in contrast to *law*, which also offers, it seems, a more stable system. It is therefore possible that we find ourselves in an intermediate phase between two states of the language. Ultimately, *idā* could return to its pre-classical and classical domain, the Eventual, and then *law* would supplant it in the core of the conditional (Potential and Unreal), as can be observed in some dialects, especially Egyptian. This assumption would be realized only if the development in question were not perceived as too colloquial by speakers inclined to over-correction. In any case, it is already possible to hear on the airwaves uses conforming to what

is found in the literary works used here. Thus, in a newsletter broadcast by BBC Arabic on April 4th 2009, in connection with elections to be held in Eastern Europe, the journalist, speaking of a woman standing for election, said: *law untuḥibat... sa-takūn awwala -mra'a...* This we can not translate in any way other than "if she is/was elected... she will be/would be the first woman..." We find in this example both the absence of the *fa-* that should have been used according to classical rules, and the use of *law* to express a *fact to come* and, in addition, *possible*, i.e. a Potential⁴⁸. This fact remains: the language, as it is practised today, and for at least the past forty years, does not coincide with the vast majority of descriptive works that surround it. The question thus arises of what we are teaching...

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⁴⁸. More recently, *Al-'Arabiyya* channel, on March 2nd 2011, was reproducing and summarising Mu'ammār al-Qaḍḍāfi's speech 20 days into the Libyan revolution. The script was as follows : *iḍā lam tastaqīrr Lībiyā sa-yataḥawwalu l-baḥru al-mutawassiṭu ilā qarṣanatīn* ("If Libya does not remain stable, the Mediterranean Sea will turn to piracy"). Here we see once more the same syntax we showed in our literary corpus, and where only a Potential interpretation is possible, due to the threatening tone used by the leader of the Great Ġamāhīriyya.

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